

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 NEA-11 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08
COME-00 /114 W

-----130725 021651Z /47

R 021135Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2906
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MASERU
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 DURBAN 0274

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SF (TRANSKEI)
SUBJ: TRANSKEI'S BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

REF: A. DURBAN 232 B. STATE 103855

1. SUMMARY: THE RUPTURE IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TRANSKEI AND SOUTH AFRICA APPEARS TO REFLECT BOTH INTERNAL POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THE MATANZIMA REGIME AS WELL AS A CALCULATED PLOY BY TRANSKEI TO WIN INTERNATIONAL RESPECTABILITY. IT HAS ASSISTED MATANZIMA, FOR THE PRESENT, IN STEMMING THE DEFECTION OF A REBELLIOUS GROUP (THE PONDOS). HE HAS RETAINED BOTH THE VITAL SAG BUDGETARY SUPPLEMENT OF R173 MILLION (\$200 MILLION) AND THE CORPS OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN CIVILIAN ADVISORS, AND HAS AT LEAST CALLED HIS COUNTRY TO THE ATTENTION
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OF A WORLD WHICH HAS IGNORED ITS "INDEPENDENCE" SINCE 1976. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO PROSPECT THE SAG WILL ACCEDE TO HIS DEMANDS FOR MORE LAND, AND THE PONDOS CONTINUE TO FORM A CORE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION WHICH COULD EASILY ATTRACT OTHER TRIBAL GROUPS. THE WORLD WILL PROBABLY QUICKLY DISMISS MATANZIMA'S INITIATIVE, FORCING HIM TO CONTINUE TO COEXIST WITH THE SAG, WITH OR WITHOUT AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS.

END SUMMARY.

2. VIEWED FROM A LONGER PERSPECTIVE AFTER THE EVENT, PRIME MINISTER MATANZIMA'S DECISION TO BREAK FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA APPEARS TO RISE FROM A COMBINATION OF FACTORS. DESPITE THE LIABILITY OF NOT BEING ABLE TO DISCUSS THE DEVELOPMENT WITH TRANSKEI OFFICIALS, THE CENTRAL REASONS FOR THE BREAK EMERGE FROM KNOWLEDGE OF THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED, GENERALLY RELIABLE SECONDARY SOURCES AND AN ADEQUATE PUBLIC RECORD OF SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS.

3. MATANZIMA APPARENTLY DETERMINED SOME TIME AGO ON A COURSE OF EVENTUALLY BREAKING RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA TO DEMONSTRATE MORE DRAMATICALLY TRNSKEI'S INDEPENDENT POSITION VIS-A-VIS ITS PARENT. EARLY DURING INDEPENDENCE MATANZIMA MOVED TO ELIMINATE WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS FROM THE SECURITY POLICE AND, LATER, FROM THE TINY DEFENSE FORCE, EVEN THOUGH HE CONTINUED TO ENCOURAGE THEIR PRESENCE IN THE CIVILIAN AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. THOUGH UNEXPECTED AND UNRELATED TO ANY OTHER EVENTS AT THE TIME, THESE MOVES APPARENTLY WERE DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE DEPENDABILITY AND LOYALTY OF THE TRANSKEI SECURITY FORCES AND REDUCE POTENTIAL SAG OBSTRUCTION TO SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS MATANZIMA MIGHT DECIDE TO TAKE. HE ALSO ACTIVELY SOUGHT OTHER FOREIGN BENEFACTORS AND FREQUENTLY STATED THAT, IF NECESSARY, TRANSKEI WOULD FIND AID IN THE "MIDDLE EAST" (BY WHICH HE APPARENTLY MEANT EITHER ISRAEL OR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARABS) OR EVEN IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD. HE FREQUENTLY RE-ITERATED CLAIMS TO ADDITIONAL LAND IN SOUTH AFRICA, INCLUDING EAST GRIQUALAND (EG), AND MADE SEVERAL LUDICROUS THREATS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA IN THE PAST YEAR, ALL PREDICATED UPON THE TRANSFER OF EG FROM CAPE PROVINCE TO NATAL. HOWEVER, NO ONE TOOK HIM SERIOUSLY, LEAST OF ALL THE SAG (CAPE TOWN 772) AND THERE WAS NO DEFINITIVE PRIOR WARNING THAT A DIPLOMATIC BREAK WAS CONTEMPLATED, MUCH LESS IMMINENT.

4. THE TIMING OF THE APRIL 10 DECISION TO SEVER TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA PROBABLY RESULTED FROM AN AWARENESS BY MATANZIMA THAT SOME BOLD POLITICAL ACT WAS NECESSARY TO STEM THE GROWING DEFECTION OF PONDO MPS FROM HIS RULING TRANSKEI NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (TNIP). THE PONDO SPLIT, WHICH ONLY BEGAN IN MARCH (DURBAN 199, 215) REPRESENTED THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT POST-INDEPENDENCE TRANSKEI POLITICAL OPPOSITION WHICH, IF NOT QUICKLY HALTED, COULD HAVE CAUSED A CRITICAL LOSS OF PRESTIGE AND ALSO ENCOURAGED OTHER GROUPS TO SHIFT ALLEGIANCE FROM TNIP. THE FORTUITOUS CONVERGENCE OF THE APRIL 1 TRANSFER TO EG TO NATAL, AN AREA CLAIMED BY THE PONDOS AND OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM, WITH THE NEED TO RETAIN PONDO SUPPORT AND DIVERT PUBLIC ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE INTERNAL

FEUD, PRESENTED MATANZIMA WITH THE ISSUE HE NEEDED.

5. THE CONSENSUS OF POST SOURCES IS THAT MATANZIMA WAS SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING ONLY HIS IMMEDIATE GOALS. FURTHER EXPECTED PONDON DEFECTIONS FROM TNIP DID NOT OCCUR AND THE BREAK GENERALLY WAS WELL RECEIVED BY TRANSKEIANS, PARTICULARLY PONDOS WHOSE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS WERE SUPPORTED. IN ADDITION MATANZIMA AVOIDED THE MOST SERIOUS POTENTIAL PENALTY FOR HIS ACTION WHEN THE SAG AGREED TO CONTINUE EXISTING AGREEMENTS IN FORCE WITH TRANSKEI, INCLUDING THE VITAL ANNUAL DOLE (R173.5 MILLION THIS YEAR). ALSO, AFTER SOME EARLY INDECISION, THE WHITE SECONDED CIVIL SERVANTS DECIDED TO REMAIN.

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6. HOWEVER, MATANZIMA FAILED TO WIN INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OR SYMPATHY AND THE DOMESTIC RESPITE IS ALREADY BEGINNING TO DISSIPATE. THE DEFECTING PONDO MPS SINCE HAVE FORMED THEIR OWN PARTY (THE TRANSKEI NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY) AND MISS STELLA ISGCAU, A FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER WHOM MATANZIMA HAD SACKED FOR PREGNANCY, ELOQUENTLY DEFENDED HERSELF IN THE ASSEMBLY IN AN UNPRECEDENIALLY DIRECT AND FORCEFUL CHALLENGE TO MATANZIMA (DURBAN A-30). POST'S JOURNALIST SOURCES INDICATE THE TNIP-PONDO RIFT IS EXPECTED TO WIDEN IN THE NEXT

FEW MONTHS, THOUGH IT MAY BE LESS SEVERE THAN IF MATANZIMA
HAD NOT WON SOME PONDO AFFECTION BY BREAKING WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

7. IN ADDITION, THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD THE SAG WILL ACCEDE
TO TRANSKEI'S DEMANDS ON EAST GRIQUALAND. PRIME MINISTER
VORSTER HAS EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT THERE WILL BE NO TER-
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RITORIAL CONCESSIONS EXCEPT ON THE BASIS OF THE NATIVE TRUST
AND LAND ACT OF 1936 AND AGREEMENTS PREVIOUSLY MADE IN
CONNECTION WITH THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO TRANSKEI.
EG IS NOT CONVEYED IN EITHER CONTEXT. IN FACT, THE STATUS
OF THE AREA WAS INVESTIGATED BY THE (ALL-WHITE) STEYN COM-
MISSION IN 1976 AND A DETERMINATION MADE THAT THE PONDOS HAVE
NO VALID HISTORICAL CLAIM WHATEVER TO THE REGION.

8. MATANZIMA'S DECISION POSES CERTAIN PREDICAMENTS FOR HIS
COUNTRY. WHILE HE CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A PUBLIC POSTURE OF
DEFIANCE TOWARD THE SAG HE HAS HAD TO TAKE OTHER, SOMEWHAT
DEMEANING STEPS UNDERSCORING TRANSKEI'S DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH
AFRICA. SHORTLY AFTER ANNOUNCING THE BREAK, HE WAS FORCED
PUBLICLY TO CALL ON THE WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN ADVISORS TO REMAIN
IN TRANSKEI AND HE HAD, IN EFFECT, TO ASSUME A SUPPLICANT'S
ROLE IN REQUESTING THE SAG NOT TO CUT FINANCIAL AID OR ABROGATE
OTHER AGREEMENTS VITAL TO TRANSKEI. LATER, THROUGH HIS BROTHER,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GEORGE MATANZIMA, HE NEGOTIATED A CON-
TINUATION OF RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA ON A REDUCED BUT
STILL VISIBLE LEVEL--ACTIONS FURTHER AFFECTING HIS
CREDIBILITY AND IMAGE (DURBAN 257).

9. LITTLE THUS APPEARS TO HAVE CHANGED AS A RESULT OF
MATANZIMA'S ACTION. HE HAS SO FAR MANAGED TO RETAIN THE
IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE SAG RELATIONSHIP--THE FUNDS AND THE
OFFICIALS--TO ENSURE THE CONTINUING FUNCTIONING AND GROWTH OF
HIS GOVERNMENT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL IF SOUTH AFRICAN
PRIVATE INVESTMENT HAS BEEN SCARED OFF BY THE DIPLOMATIC BREAK
BUT IT IS LIKELY COMPANIES CONTEMPLATING INVESTMENT WILL
PERCEIVE THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN THE STATUS QUO ANTE.
THE PONDO SPLIT MAY HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY INHIBITED BUT
PROBABLY NOT STOPPED AND MATANZIMA IS STILL CONFRONTED BY THE
POLITICAL DILEMMA INHERENT IN THE TRIBAL FRAGMENTATION OF THE
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TRANSKEI BODY POLITIC. EG WILL REMAIN PART OF NATAL.
TRANSKEI'S CASERECEIVED ANOTHER HEARING BEFORE THE WORLD
BUT THE NATURE OF ITS SELF-MADE PREDICAMENT WAS TOO APPARENT.

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR MATANZIMA STILL LIES IN AID, TRADE AND
ADVISORS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND HE WOULD NOT, AT THIS POINT,
APPEAR TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE COMPLETE, CLEAN BREAK NECESSARY
TO CONVINCE THE WORLD OF TRANSKEI'S INDEPENDENCE. AN IRONY
OF THE EXERCISE HOWEVER, MAY LIE IN THE FACT THAT BY ITS
ACTION TRANSKEI DEMONSTRATED IT PROBABLY DOES HAVE AT LEAST
AS MUCH POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AS ANY SIMILAR SMALL STATE
OVERLY DEPENDENT ON ECONOMIC TIES WITH A POWERFUL NEIGHBOR.
FARBER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INTERRUPTION, TRANSKEI
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DURBAN00274
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780187-0070
Format: TEL
From: DURBAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805103/aaaadkdl.tel
Line Count: 233
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8446d593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DURBAN 232
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2523166
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRANSKEI'S BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8446d593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014